

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CASCADE COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

2017

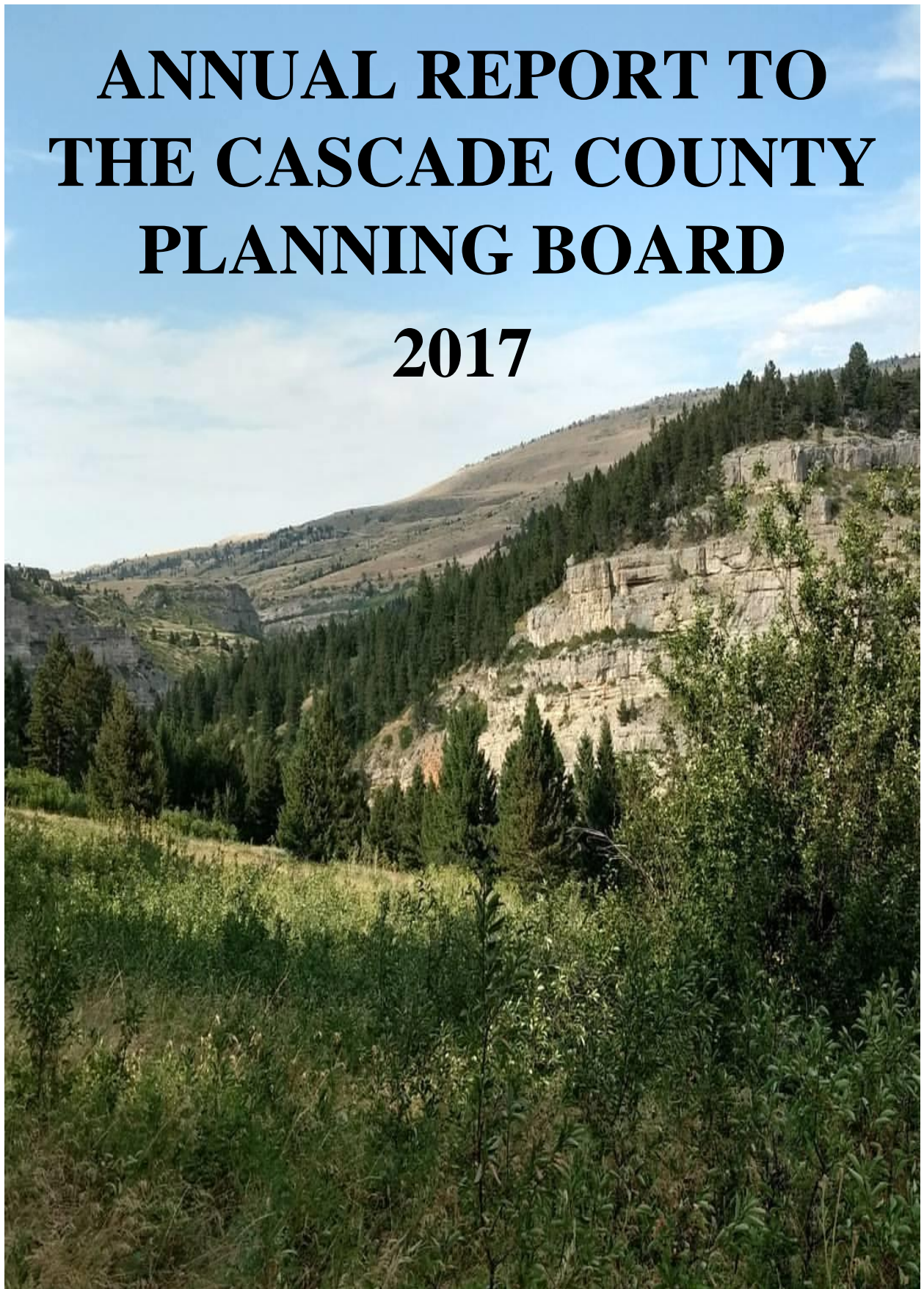


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BACKGROUND

The by-laws adopted by the Cascade County Planning Board state that, “The regular meeting held on the third Thursday (amended to Tuesday) in January shall be known as the Annual Meeting and shall be for the purpose of electing officers, receiving annual reports of officers, staff, committees, and for such business that may arise” (Article VI; Section 1(C)). This report is prepared in response to that requirement.

On October 10, 1973, the Board of Cascade County Commissioners passed a Resolution of Intention to create a County Planning Board. Following a public hearing and receiving no protests, the resolution forming the Cascade County Planning Board was passed November 19, 1973. On January 22, 1974, the Cascade County Planning Board held their first meeting. The board has continued to meet regularly since that time.

The Cascade County Development Plan (Comprehensive Plan/Master Plan/Growth Policy) was adopted by the Cascade County Commission in 1979, amended in 1982, 1998 and again in 2006. In 2014, the commissioners adopted an updated growth policy which underwent a significant rewrite. Population trends, economic conditions, and local services show a positive trend for growth in Cascade County. New to the growth policy is a section under Conditional Development Areas called the Military Height Zones Conditional Development Areas as well as the Military Runway Accident Potential Zones. Details about developing in these areas are covered in the Cascade County Zoning Regulations.

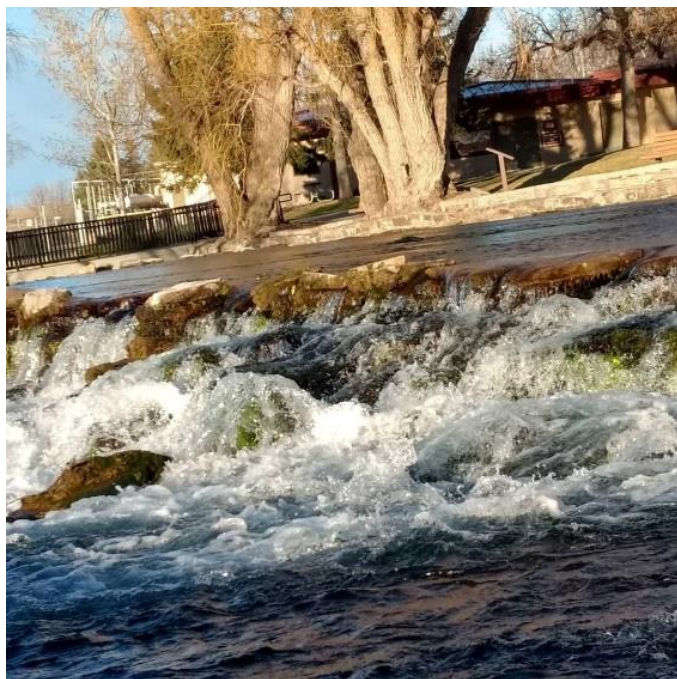
In 2003, the State of Montana Legislature amended the laws regarding development plans. Through the passing of Senate Bill 326, all governing bodies which have a current development plan may revise it following the procedures in Chapter 1, Title 76, Part 6, of the Montana Code Annotated (MCA).

The growth policy is a guide to address the community needs and direction that the county commissioners want to implement and protect. Generally, these are updated every five years.

In 2010, the Board of County Commissioners created a Public Works Department (PWD) and moved the Weed Department, Mosquito Department, Superintendent of County Buildings Department, Buildings Maintenance Department, Road Department, Bridge Department, Radio & Communications Department and Planning Department under the umbrella of Public Works. Brian Clifton was the successful candidate hired as Cascade County’s first Public Works Director. Over the course of the next two years, the new department underwent significant restructuring and reorganization.

All of the departments which were originally placed under Public Works were restructured and renamed as divisions within the Public Works Department. A Fleet Maintenance Division was created to oversee all of the maintenance of the Public Works Department fleet of equipment which combined the mechanics and machinists from the Road Division. Robert Wilson became the Superintendent of the Fleet Maintenance Division. Next, the Weed Division and the

Mosquito Division managers were reduced in force and combined to create one division, the Weed & Mosquito Division. Ryan Arkoudas was the successful candidate to become the new division manager, now filled by Josh Blystone. The Superintendent of County Buildings and the Building Maintenance Divisions, which were previously co-directed by Brian Clifton and Kerry Saunders, were combined into one division, and Kerry Saunders was named the Superintendent of the Building Maintenance Division. Roy Curtis is the current Superintendent. The Planning Division remained the same and Susan Conell was named the Director of the Planning Division replacing Brian Clifton who was the previous Planning Director. In November 2016, Susan retired and the planning administrator position has been vacant throughout 2017. Finally, the Road Division and Bridge Division were combined and Rick Schutz became the Superintendent of the newly combined Road & Bridge Division.



In November of 2013, the Board of Commissioners separated the buildings and facilities responsibilities from the events responsibilities within the Expo Park. The newly formed Expo Park Maintenance Division became part of the Public Works Department and consists of a Division Superintendent, Rick Cole, and laborers as assigned by the Public Works Director. At the conclusion of 2013, Cascade County's Public Works Department consisted of six (6) divisions.

In March of 2014, a Deputy Director of Public Works position was created to

assist the Director in the management of the divisions, special projects and other managerial duties associated with the department. Jim Ekberg, formerly of the Planning Division, was hired as the first Deputy Director.

In July of 2015, the GIS Department was restructured and became a division under the Public Works Department. Tom Mital is the GIS Mapping Technician and has been in that role with Cascade County since 2004. On November 1, 2016, county addressing was back solely with the County GIS Division after sharing duties with the City of Great Falls in years past. Cascade County's Public Works Department currently consists of eight (8) divisions to include the Communications Division and GIS Division.

CERTIFICATES OF SURVEY

Of our many customer services, one of the less noticeable responsibilities of the Cascade County Planning Staff is the review of certificates of survey and plats. Under the provisions outlined in

Title 76, Chapter 3, Montana Code Annotated, certain divisions of land are not subdivisions, but are subject to the Subdivision and Platting Act's surveying requirements. These typically include lot aggregations, boundary line adjustments, family conveyances, the creation of tracts to be used for agricultural purposes, etc. A review meeting is held for each of the proposed certificates of survey with members from the City-County Health Department, the Clerk & Recorder's Office, and the Planning Division Staff as well as the Attorney's Office and City of Great Falls' Planning Staff when available. Time is spent reviewing the exempted certificates of survey and guiding the surveyors on the appropriate submittal prior to the Clerk and Recorder's Office filing the surveys.

In 2017, sixty-nine (69) certificates of surveys (eight (8) in the City of Great Falls, and the other sixty-one (61) in the county) were filed at the Clerk and Recorder's Office after being reviewed by our COS review group.

Category	Number of Surveys Filed in County
Boundary Line Adjustment (76-3-207(1)(a,d,e))	18
Court Ordered (76-3-201(1)(a))	0
Divided by County Road	1
Create Public Utility Site	3
Agricultural Exemption (76-3-201(1)(b))	2
Family Conveyance (76-3-207(1)(b))	13
Correction of Errors	4
Retracement of Existing Parcel	17
Aggregation of Lots (76-3-207(1)(f))	3
Total COS Filed in 2017	69
City of Great Falls	8
Cascade County	61

PLAT ROOM

Sixty-nine (69) Certificates of Survey and forty-one (41) plats were cataloged and recorded in our files by our Mapping Technician, Greg Avent, for both the city and county jurisdiction. Of the sixty-one (61) Certificates of Survey filed for the county jurisdiction, there were eighteen (18) boundary lines adjustments, seventeen (17) retracements, thirteen (13) family conveyances, three (3) aggregation of lots, four (4) correction of errors, two (2) agricultural exemptions, one (1) divided by county road and three (3) created public utility sites. Of the twenty-four (24) plats filed in the county, there were six (6) boundary line adjustments, twelve (12) aggregation of lots, and two (2) removal of an Ag Covenant. There were also three (3) minor subdivisions, and one (1) major subdivision plat filed. These represent all of the activity within the County of Cascade, including the incorporated areas. The plat room material has been helpful to people of many

walks of life; including landowners, potential land buyers, realtors, title companies, surveyors, consultants, and researchers, to name a few.

Not only are there maps but there are also old records of right of ways, aerial photos over time, and corner recordation for locations of surveyor pins. With our resources on hand, we are able to reproduce in a large format many of these items when required.

PLATS FILED IN 2017

Category	Number of Plats Filed in County
Aggregate Lots (76-3-207(1)(f))	12
Correction	0
Relocation of Common Boundary Lines (76-3-207(1)(a,d,e))	6
Remove Ag. Covenant	2
Major Subdivision	1
Minor Subdivision	3
Plats Filed in 2017	41
Cascade County	24
City of Great Falls	17

SUBDIVISION ACTIVITY

Subdivision activity can often times go unnoticed in the actual amount of time and preparation that is spent by staff on proposals that never come to fruition. A pre-application meeting is held for each of the proposed subdivisions with the developer, surveyor, engineer, Sanitarians representing the City-County Health Department, and County Planners. Time is spent reviewing the proposed projects and providing developers with information pertinent to their plans. The following numbers do not begin to reflect those meetings since many do not go forward with their project.

Minor subdivisions (creating five lots or fewer) and major subdivisions (creating six lots or more) are reviewed by staff. After review, staff presents the proposed subdivision to the Planning Board with their recommendations forwarded to the Cascade County Commissioners for preliminary approval action. Once the commissioners have approved the preliminary plat, the developer

must satisfy the conditions set forth by the commissioners. When the developer has completed the required conditions, the subdivision is reviewed and given final approval.

In 2013, planning staff revised the Cascade County's Subdivision Regulations. The current Cascade County Subdivision Regulations were adopted by the county commissioners on October 22, 2013 by Resolution #13-82.

Year	# of Minor	# of Major	Total Lots
2002	4	0	30
2003	4	4	138
2004	8	6	94
2005	21	3	98
2006	11	10	136
2007	15	14	275
2008	6	9	174
2009	4	5	63
2010	6	2	39
2011	10	2	84
2012	6	2	60
2013	2	3	49
2014	5	0	12
2015	3	0	10
2016	3	1	32
2017	5	1	23

During the 2013 Legislative Session, Senate Bill (SB) 324 regulating buildings created for rent or lease was passed. This includes structures that operate as rental recreational camping vehicles, mobile home parks, and storage sheds. Section 6 was removed from the 2013 Subdivision Regulations Draft and a separate document was created to address SB 324 changes. These regulations are built on the State of Montana's Community Technical Assistance Program's model regulations; the minimum number of buildings for an exemption is modeled from Flathead County's Buildings for Lease or Rent Regulations.

With these subdivision regulations, a much more thorough review for each application is necessary than in years past. This review requires more of staff's time and research to make sure that the process and application is comprehensive. It necessitates

additional requirements on the developer as well, which generates further questions for staff. Three minor subdivisions were approved this year and filed, as well as one major subdivision, and two minor subdivision processes were used to remove Agricultural Covenants from existing land.

COMMUNITY DECAY, LITTER, & JUNK VEHICLES ORDINANCES

In September, 1985, the Cascade County Commissioners adopted a County Community Decay Ordinance. The program that developed around the ordinance is one that works to maintain standards of appearance, and removal of blight and decay in the county. The county commissioners originally placed the program in the City-County Health Department Solid Waste Division.

In 2007, the Solid Waste Division was transferred under the oversight of the former Road Department. In August of 2008, the Solid Waste Division was privatized and the Community Decay Ordinance and a newly created Littering Ordinance (which included Junk Vehicles) were put under the Planning Division for inspection and compliance.

Alex Dachs joined our office in September 2015 as a Planner and Code Enforcement for the Community Decay/Litter Ordinances and Junk Vehicle Program. He had been working as a

Sanitarian at the County Health Department for three (3) years prior to coming to the Planning Division. His duties currently include zoning, subdivisions and enforcement of the State of Montana Junk Vehicles and Cascade Community Decay and Litter ordinances throughout the County. Alex's authority is limited to processing complaints received from community members.

In 2014, there were some changes in the process that were implemented to the Junk Vehicle Program. That year, Cascade County abandoned the "graveyard" site for junk vehicles and implemented a "direct haul" contract. The graveyard was cleaned and cleared of contaminated soil. The direct haul contract is a way to eliminate the graveyards or junk vehicle holding facilities. When a release of ownership in a motor vehicle form is received by the Junk Vehicle Program Director and verified that it is a junk vehicle, the program director will contact the contracted hauler (S&C Auto) and have the junk vehicle immediately hauled to the Motor Vehicle Wrecking Facility (currently Pacific Steel and Recycling) dictated by the State Junk Vehicle Program.

Due to the success of the program, over time, the number of complaints has gradually decreased. In 2017 there were eighty-two (82) inspections to verify neighbors' concerns regarding junk vehicles and community decay issues. Of those, forty-one (41) cleaned up after receiving a letter or removed the litter or junk vehicle(s), and twenty-nine (29) were determined to not be in violation. Staff has issued forty-three (43) letters of warning and fifteen (15) notices to appear.

2017 Community Decay Compliance	
1 st Notice of Violation Sent	43
Notice to Appear Sent Out	15
Court Appearance	15
Trial	1

YEAR	COMPLAINTS FIELD INSPECTED	WARNING LETTERS (1st Notice)	NOTICES TO APPEAR	INITIAL LETTER COMPLIANCE	VERIFIED COMPLIANCE
2010		37	6		31
2011	120	51	14	40	37
2012	150	19	6	15	15
2013	135	17	18	17	17
2014	128	9	8	29	20
2015	90	40	9	31	29
2016	84	39	5	33	35
2017	82	43	15	41	29

We have seen the number of junk vehicles turned over to the Junk Vehicle Program continue to decrease over the last couple of years as the price of steel has remained low. As long as the vehicles are being removed, it will continue to benefit the community. In 2017, there were nine (9) junk vehicles turned over to the county that were hauled directly to Pacific Steel and Recycling for disposal.



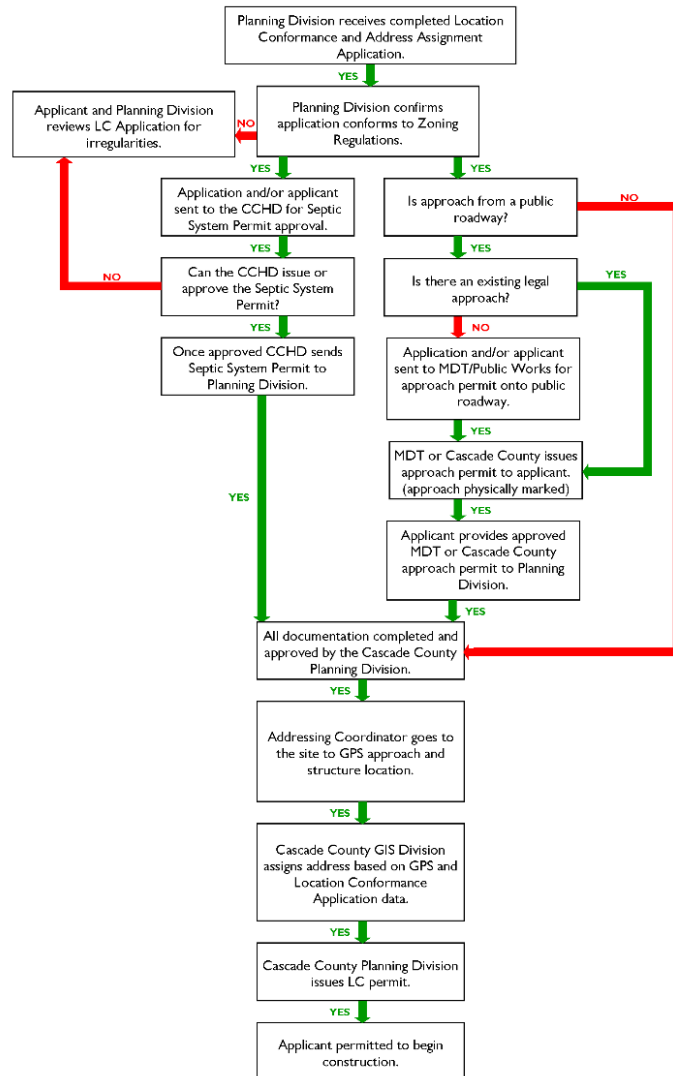
COUNTY ZONING

The County Planning Division regulates all zoning activity in the county exclusive of the incorporated communities of Belt, Neihart, Cascade, and Great Falls. The zoning regulations use a hybrid of the former zoning regulations along with a permitting system to verify that new projects meet the appropriate land use and development standards. The zoning jurisdictional area was created by the Cascade County Commission on April 26, 2005, by Resolution #05-018. The zoning regulations were rewritten or amended in 2007, 2009, 2012, twice in 2016, and in 2017 in an effort to reduce some ambiguity on definitions, zoning processes, and introduce new permits or uses. Fees remained the same in 2017. The fees have not been changed since 2007 when some of the zoning application fees were revised to reflect the actual costs of staff processing times and legal notices. These changes were adopted by the County Commissioners on October 23, 2007, after much discussion with the public, staff and the planning board.

In 2009, staff undertook re-writing and updating the zoning regulations. Many work sessions were conducted as well as a survey with the owners of those properties that would be affected by a change within the unincorporated towns to a Multi/Mixed Use Zone. The new zoning regulations were adopted by Resolution 09-82 on August 25, 2009, allowing those communities to support a local business in their town's hub center by right rather than requesting a special use permit. Allowing a second (2nd) residence per lot has been allowed in some zone districts

where they can meet health department requirements as well as setbacks in their zone district. In 2012, staff refined the zoning regulations and submitted those changes to the Planning Board for review. use permit. Allowing a second (2nd) residence per lot has been allowed in some zone districts here they can meet health department requirements as well as setbacks in their zone district. In 2012, staff refined the zoning regulations and submitted those changes to the Planning Board for review. On December 18, 2012, County Commissioners approved the zoning regulations. These changes combined the Flood Road Zoning Regulations within the county regulations rather than a separate document and adding the Military Overlay District which places height limitations for building construction over 50, 150 and 500 feet tall in certain areas. A Variance may be necessary if there are conflicts over height restrictions within the Military Overlay District.

Cascade County Planning Division Permitting Process



Throughout 2015-2017, County staff has set to improve communication between various departments. Our intention is to ensure that the Health Department does not issue septic tank permits without discussing possible issues with planning staff and likewise planning does not issue Location Conformance Permits without discussing it with the Health Department. To facilitate this communication staff has created a planning division permitting process flowchart to keep development on track.

In 2016 the Cascade County Zoning Regulations were rewritten by staff with corrections to formatting, making sure that the Montana Codes Annotated and the Administrative Rules of Montana were correct along with other sections of the Zoning Regulations. A new type of Special Use Permit was added, the Unclassified Use Permit. The Unclassified Use Permit Section was added to the regulations to allow uses possessing characteristics of such unique and special forms that each use shall be considered as an individual case regardless of their underlying zone district. The new regulations were adopted by the Cascade County Commission on June 14, 2016. The first UUP Applications were for proposed solar power plants on five (5) separate parcels in 2016.

In 2017, Zoning Regulations were revised to match changes in state laws regarding Medical Marijuana and definitions added to clarify language. Uses were added to the uses permitted with a Special Use Permit in an Agricultural district. Additionally, our office processed four (4) re-zoning applications, up from two in 2016.

Location/Conformance Permits are issued for structures prior to construction on parcels throughout the county. These permits are issued once the location of all structures and the conformance of the structures with the Cascade County Zoning Regulations have been met. In 2017, two hundred and seventy-four (274) of these permits were issued by staff, up from last year's number of two hundred seventy-three (273). When permits are not obtained prior to construction, violation notices are sent out. Several violations were remedied with the assistance of the Cascade County Civil Attorney's Office.

Category	Number of Applications Received	Number of Permits Approved	Permit applications awaiting additional information or withdrawn	Number of Permits Denied
LC Permits	269	274	28	4
Firework Permits	26	26	0	0
Special Use Permits	14	8	5	1
Floodplain Permits	20	16	4	0
Road Abandonment	4	1	3	0
Unclassified Use Permit	1	1	0	0

Special Use Permits are processed by our office. A new permit was introduced in the 2016 Zoning Regulation Re-write titled "Unclassified Use Permit". Unclassified Use Permits require extra analysis by the staff as the use may be contentious, the permit process also requires a public hearing to be held.

Special Use Permit and Unclassified Use Permit public hearings are held before the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBOA). The ZBOA conducts a public hearing to; hear the staff report which presents the application material, listens to the applicant's proposal, listen to proponents and opponents of the proposal, and then approve the application, deny the application, or approve the application with conditions. This year, staff had fourteen (14) Special Use Permit applications, five (5) of which were withdrawn or are on hold awaiting further information. Staff had one (1) Unclassified Use Permit application, which was approved.

Fireworks Permits for selling fireworks in the county during the 4th of July and year end celebrations in December are also reviewed and issued by the Planning Division. These require a County Fireworks Permit as well as a Location/Conformance Permit. Staff inspect each firework stand prior to allowing them to open up. A follow-up inspection ensures that they have been promptly removed. In 2017, twenty-six (26) permits were issued for the sale of fireworks, down from thirty-three (33) in 2016.

ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

The Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBOA) is a five member board that makes decisions on Special Use Permits, Unclassified Use Permits, Variances, and Appeals of the Zoning Administrator's decisions. A public hearing is scheduled when an application is received, deemed complete by Planning staff and all notifications have been completed. The members are appointed by the county commissioners.

As mentioned earlier, there was one (1) Unclassified Use Permit application, fourteen (14) Special Use Permit applications (two of which were withdrawn), and two (2) variance requests.

The Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBOA) had two positions that expired at the end of December, 2017.

The 2018 Zoning Board of Adjustment members are:

1. Charles Keuther, term to expire 12/31/19;
2. Rob Skawinski, term to expire 12/31/18;
3. Bill Austin, term to expire 12/31/18;
4. Leonard Reed, term to expire 12/31/18.
5. Vacant, term to expire 12/31/19;

PLANNING BOARD

The Cascade County Planning Board serves in an advisory capacity to presently established boards and officials. Planning Board members are appointed by the county commissioners for a two-year term. County policy generally limits board members to three consecutive two-year terms. Rob Skawinski, Ken Thornton and Richard Liebert will have their terms expire 12/31/18.

The 2018 Planning Board members are:

1. Elliot Merja, indefinite;
2. Dexter Busby, term to expire 12/31/2019;
3. Rob Skawinski, term to expire 12/31/2018;
4. Ken Thornton, term to expire 12/31/2018;
5. Dan Johnstone, term to expire 12/31/2019
6. Mark Carlson, term to expire in 12/31/2019
7. Richard Liebert, term to expire 12/31/2018



Photovoltaic solar panels in Cascade County off Black Eagle Road.

FLOODPLAIN REGULATIONS

On February 15, 1980, the Cascade County Planning Staff began to administer floodplain regulations within its jurisdictional area. In January, 1984, the Planning Director was designated Floodplain Administrator for all of the unincorporated areas of Cascade County. Changes in federal and state laws required that local floodplain regulations be amended in 1991 and March 12, 2013. The regulations, which took effect in 2013, increased the Floodplain Permit fees from \$100.00 to \$250.00 due to the increased workload caused by the amendments.

In 1991, Cascade County was one of only a few Montana communities that was accepted into the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Community Rating System (CRS) program. As a result, Cascade County citizens required to purchase flood insurance receive a 10% reduction in those insurance rates. The CRS Program requires renewal annually. As part of our participation in the program, staff continues to provide assistance on floodplain matters to the general public, real estate agents, appraisers, insurance agents, and lending institutions.



In 2013, work was completed with FEMA to update digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (d-FIRM) which allows staff and public to obtain the maps digitally for overlaying upon existing parcels. The county participated in co-hosting a meeting at the City of Great Falls with an open house for the public to answer their various questions as well as host several speakers from the state and FEMA.

In June 2014, a joint meeting was held with the City of Great Falls to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the "Big Flood." Guests included officials from DNRC and FEMA. Members of the public who were affected by the flood shared their stories and photos from their first-hand experience of the flood.

New floodplain regulations were adopted by the county on February 15, 2002 and again with Resolution 13-19 on March 19th, 2013. They were rewritten because of new digital FIRM (d-firms) maps produced by FEMA. Cascade County officially adopted the d-firms on March 19, 2013.

We have been using a new GIS program with zoning and flood layers which has simplified our work efforts when determining zoning and floodplain status. Tom Mital, the GIS Division Mapping Technician, was able to combine the zoning maps with flood zone overlay maps which has helped make our work much more accurate. He also helped with the CRS site visit as he was able to map open spaces and low density zoned areas within the county.

FEMA has also begun offering the 100-year floodplain maps to the public with a KML file that opens within the computer application Google Earth. Now anyone with access to a computer can download the files from FEMA's website and see which parcels the floodplain covers throughout the USA. Staff has installed these layers on Google Earth and use them in combination with the paper maps we have laminated in our filing system.

2017 was a relatively calm year as far as flooding in our area. The Sun River, the Missouri, Belt Creek and the Sand Coulee in particular were all causing havoc in their respective areas in 2011. Areas in and around Great Falls, Belt, and Sun River were especially hit hard. In a matter of days, the floods were very wide spread because of the flat topography. Many people scrambled to get insurance to only find there was a waiting period of 30 days before they were insured! Our staff was part of those in the community documenting the extent of the flooding. In our office, we have more than one hundred photos of the damage and extent of the flooding. Hundreds of miles were traveled accessing and documenting the damage by the flooding event.

Alex attended the class “Managing Floodplain Development through the National Flood Insurance Program” at the FEMA school in Maryland in 2017. The value of learning about flood issues throughout the United States is hard to place a price on. The lessons of Hurricanes Katrina, Sandy, Harvey, and other areas affected by flooding, show the value of the floodplain permitting process.

Our levee systems protect several areas that fall within the jurisdiction of the City of Great Falls, Cascade County and the levee districts such as Vaughn and Sun River. In the past, the Army Corps of Engineers would re-certify and stand behind the integrity of the levees and certify that they have met and continue to meet current standards for certification. A meeting was held in Glasgow, MT in 2015, to discuss the status of levees throughout the state. FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers had representatives at the meeting to discuss re-certification of the levees and answer questions. It was a great opportunity to learn firsthand the status of levees in Montana and how to recertify the levees for the interest of our community members. Alex Dachs and Susan Conell were the staff members that were in attendance.

We continue to see the community members apply for Floodplain Permits. In 2017, the County



received twenty-two (22) floodplain permit applications, nineteen (19) were approved, zero (0) were denied, and three (3) are on hold until the applicant provides additional information or have been withdrawn. Inspections are done before and after for confirmation of compliance to their Floodplain Permits. Our office is able to assist property owners, realtors, lenders, and insurance agents with their flooding issues, such as providing Base

Flood Elevations, and if flood insurance would be required. Every five (5) years the County’s participation in the National Flood Insurance Program’s Community Rating System (CRS) is evaluated and rated based upon activities completed by the county. Between 2016 and 2017, Planning staff worked closely with the State of Montana’s Department of Natural Resources’

Floodplain Management Program and FEMA's Region VIII offices to ensure the county retained its current rating of an 8 in the CRS program.

STAFF DUTIES

Alex Dachs is our Senior Planner and Code Enforcement Technician. He joined the Planning Division (September 2015) after working as a Sanitarian at the Health Department and County for three (3) years. He is responsible for reviewing subdivisions, administering the zoning regulations, floodplain regulations and the Community Rating System (CRS) program, zoning permits, county park land, enforcement of the State of Montana Junk Vehicles and Cascade Community Decay ordinance throughout the County and various other duties. He assists in the everyday planning duties as needed, which include processing the zone changes, subdivision applications, and special use permits. Alex presents re-zone and subdivision requests before both the Planning Board and the county commissioners. He reviews the certificates of survey prior to filing for accuracy and completeness as well as participates in the pre-application meetings with developers and property owners. He also assists the public with zoning

questions, explaining zoning uses and processes as well as investigating alleged violations. Additionally, Alex is busy with attending meetings and developing stronger community relationships with his counterparts as well as the community. He also had the opportunity to attend the "Managing Floodplain Development through the National Flood Insurance Program in May 2017 at the FEMA campus in Emmitsburg, Maryland and will be taking the Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM) exam in March of 2018. Together with the rest of the staff, they perform all duties requested as well as any additional duties assigned by the Cascade County Commissioners. Alex was born and raised in the Flathead Valley and attended college at Montana State University. He enjoys spending time outdoors hiking, fishing, spending time on the lakes and rivers, enjoying the beautiful landscapes and observing the wildlife of Montana.

Susan Conell was originally hired in August 2006 as a Planner for Cascade County. Susan was the successful applicant when the Planning Director position was formally opened up in August of 2010.

In March of 2013, Susan passed and obtained her certification as a Certified Floodplain



Manager (CFM). Susan retired from Cascade County in November 2016 but has since returned as a part-time employee in July of 2017. She is responsible for reviewing subdivisions, administering the zoning regulations, floodplain program and zoning permits, and various other duties. She assists in the everyday planning duties as needed, which include processing the zone changes, subdivision applications, and special use permits. She participates in the pre-application meetings with developers and property owners. She also assists the public with zoning questions, explaining zoning uses and processes as well as investigating alleged violations.

Sandor Hopkins joined the Planning Division in September 2017. He is a graduate of CMR High School and Montana State University – Bozeman, and came to work for Cascade County after spending his first few years after graduation in the business world. He aids in the daily operations and projects of the Planning Division and keeps the website current. In his free time, Sandor enjoys camping, hiking, skiing, and travelling across our great state.

Anna Weber is our newest planner and was hired with Cascade County on December 11th, 2017. Anna was born and raised in Great Falls until she went to Missoula to attend the University of Montana. There, she studied Psychology as well as Forensics, receiving her bachelor's degree in May of 2017. In June 2017, she also received her Property/Casualty and Life/Health insurance licenses through the state of Montana. She is looking forward to learning and growing as a planner here in Cascade County.

Greg Avent has been with the county since October of 1998. He provides the Planning Division with technical assistance in the areas of cartography, surveying, road construction inspection and approval, floodplain management, computer expertise, and in providing exhibits for staff reports and oral presentations. Greg also assists with the issuance of Location Conformance Permits. His past experience with Montana Department of Transportation has been an asset with his understanding of the road maps, recordation of easements, etc. Greg attended a national floodplain school in Maryland during September of 2003. With our new scanner/copier, Greg has been busy scanning the certificates of survey and plats for eventual electronic mail readiness. He has scanned thousands of documents in our office. It makes it very useful to realtors, surveyors, title companies and attorneys who would rather receive the information electronically than come in for a paper copy. He is much appreciated by both staff and the community that he helps.

FY 17-18 BUDGET

The Cascade County Planning Division was provided with an overall operating budget of \$386,494 for FY 2017-2018. Planning staff will continue in 2018 to be busy with updating our regulations after changes in the previous legislative session, updating subdivision regulations, answering general inquiries regarding zoning and land use, and providing maps and other services.



CONCLUSION

The Planning Staff continues to provide planning and land use expertise to the Cascade County Commission and the citizens of Cascade County with the Planning Board providing recommendations to the Commission. The Planning Office receives inquiries on a daily basis from prospective buyers, current owners, and future developers of property in Cascade County. These requests often include information on land use regulations, land access, floodplain management, and building code information from this office. Outside of answering their questions, we often refer them to other county, state and federal agencies that may be of help to them.

When a customer needs copies of county maps, subdivision plats and certificates of survey, our office can help fulfill their requests. Many attorneys, realtors and title companies also request information regarding land use and surveying regulations so they can provide correct information to their clients. Staff is also requested to provide information and county regulations to citizens involved in a dispute with a neighbor and may even act as an arbitrator in such disputes.

In 2017, the Cascade County Planning Division's office updated its zoning regulations to allow for certain land uses not typically allowed in a zoning district through the Unclassified Use Permit process. There was a slight increase in Location Conformance Permits applied for over the last few years and a significant increase over previous years as the number has almost tripled compared to 2013. This increase is probably due to enforcement activities on structures that were built in recent years without permits using Google Earth, finding violations for structures without permits as they are being built as well as complaints forwarded to staff from the Department of Revenue. The number of subdivisions still continues to remain low, but inquiries on possible subdivisions have increased in the last few months. There has been a steady increase in the number of Certificates of Survey, which may be reflective of potential projects that may occur in the county. The Planning Office processed 22 floodplain permit applications and continues to attend the monthly Conservation District meetings to stay informed of projects that may need Floodplain permits or those that may be in violation. There is a continued effort to

improve coordination with other county divisions and departments to assist land owners with land use inquiries of all kinds.

We look forward to a great year with a great board and staff.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian K. Clifton

Public Works Director